THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) An "Agreement on the establishment of a Joint Liner Service between ports of Black Sea (Novorossiysk) and ports of India" was signed in Moscow on 11 February, 1997.

(b) The Agreement provides for establishment of a Joint Liner Service between the basic ports of Novorossiysk and Mumbai and the optional ports of Constanza, Varna, Bourgas, Ilyichevsk, Odessa and Ust-Dunaisk in the Black Sea and Chennai, Kochi and Calcutta in India. By this Agreement, India and Russia are to deploy one or two vessels for carriage of conventional cargoes and containers, and have also provisionally agreed to provide a monthly sailing in each direction. The Agreement also provides for reciprocal privileges to both Novorossiysk Shipping Company and the Shipping Corporation of India Ltd., including for port services in India and Russia.

(c) The Agreement became effective upon its signature on 11 February 1997; the operation of the Joint Liner Service is expected to commence from June, 1997.

[English]

Centrally Protected Forts in Rajasthan

2284. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have received a request for development of Centrally Protected Forts in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(d) if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the time by which a decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) to (e) The centrally protected Forts in Rajasthan are maintained, preserved and environmentally developed as per their requirements based on archaeological norms and availability of funds.

National Sports Policy

2285. SHRI SYDAIAH KOTA :
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the new national sports policy has been finalised;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, when the Government propose to finalise it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI R. DHANUSHKODI ATHITHAN) : (a) to (c) A draft New National Sports Policy has been formulated. It has been circulated to all the concerned organisations inviting their comments and is yet to be finalised. Its main features are as under :-

(1) Broad-basing of Sports;

(2) Creation of Sports Infrastructure;

(3) Mobilisation of Mass-media in introducing a Sports Culture in the country;

(4) Achieving excellence at the National and International levels;

(5) Scientific back-up to sports persons;

(6) Training and Development of Coaches, Sports Scientists, Judges, Refrees and Umpires;

(7) Incentives to Sports persons;

(8) Resource Mobilisation for Sports; and

(9) Easy access to International quality sports equipment.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

2286. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH :
SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to provide fully air conditioned facilities to the Indian Museum, Calcutta;

(b) whether it is also a fact that experts have suggested that air conditioning of all the buildings of the Museum is necessary for proper conservation and preservation;

(c) when it is likely to be taken up;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken for proper maintenance and care of the National Museum?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) to (d) The Government do not have any such proposal under consideration since neither any request has been received from the Indian Museum for providing air conditioning facilities for the full building of the Indian Museum nor any such suggestions have been made by any of the experts of the High Powered Building

Committee which is entrusted with the proper maintenance/upkeep/repair of the existing building of the Indian Museum. Moreover, the two existing buildings of the Indian Museum, Calcutta are quite aged, porticoed, plastered and dome-type in elegant structure, and, therefore, the superstructure of the building is not conductive for Central air conditioning. None-the-less, special care has been taken to install split type/window type air conditioning facilities for proper conservation and preservation of the highly sensitive objects.

(e) The National Museum building is a new one and is centrally air conditioned for the proper care and maintenance of the museum holdings. Besides, the National Museum Conservation Laboratory is regularly monitoring the control of temparature and humidity for the same purpose.

Seminar on Roads

2287. SHRI T. GOPAL KRISHNA :
SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN :
SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether a national seminar on "natural disasters reduction on roads" was held in New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the name of countries participated in the Seminar;

(d) the suggestions made by the experts;

(e) whether the Government propose to implement the suggestions; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Seminar was held from January 29-31, 1997 and was organised by Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi on behalf of World Road Congress (PIARC), G-2 Group and in association with Ministry of Surface Transport. The Seminar provided an opportunity to the Asian Experts to present and exchange information as well as practices being followed in their respective countries dealing with evaluation and prediction of hazards; laws and regulations; pre-event measures; disaster preparedness; emergency planning and management; repairing of infrastructure; post-event measures.

(c) The Seminar was attended by over 150 distinguished delegates including 33 foreign delegates from 15 countries, including Hon'ble Deto Seri S. Samy Vellu, Minister of Works, Malaysia.

(d) The major recommendations of the experts included the following :

(1) Development of National Commission on Natural Disaster Mitigation in various countries.

(2) Strengthening of Regional Co-operation in the area of Natural Hazard Mitigation.

(3) Creation of National Data base on Natural Disasters related to Roads and to prepare suitable guidelines to mitigate these disasters in future as well as sharing of data on regionals basis.

(4) Strengthening of Research and Development Activities to enhance the ability of prediction as well as forecast about the occurences of natural hazards.

(5) Complete information dissemination and public awareness programmes.

(6) Budgetary provisions to meet the emergencies arising due to natural disasters related to roads.

(e) and (f) The recommendations by the experts are general in nature. As and when specific proposals are received these will be duly considered.

Irrigation Projects in Gujarat and Maharashtra

2288. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether irrigation facilities in Gujarat and Maharashtra are insufficient;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken/being taken to solve the problem;

(c) the details of the major and medium irrigation projects in Maharashtra and Gujarat which have so far been completed and those which are still incomplete alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps the Government propose to take to ensure timely completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) and (b) Against Ultimate Irrigation Potential assessed for Gujarat and Maharashtra of 4.75 million hectares and 7.30 million hectares respectively, the irrigation potential likely to have been created in these States by the end of 1995-96 is 3.34 million hectares and 4.83 million hectares respectively. The major reasons for the gap between ultimate irrigation potential and irrigation potential created so far, is thin spreading of funds on irrigation projects and consequential delay in completing ongoing irrigation projects. The steps taken by the Government to increase irrigation facilities inter-alia include emphasis on (i) early completion of ongoing projects, (ii) greater users' participation in irrigation projects, (iii) making command